

...his party.

KIND WORDS FOR THE CHURCH.

Today we take pleasure in copying in toto, a letter sent to the Belfast Evening Telegram by a prominent and influential gentleman of that city, Mr. H. Cherry Jones. The letter was written from Salt Lake City and appeared in the Belfast paper of Jan. 2. We understand that the Telegram has been rather prejudiced and illiberal in its treatment of the so-called "Mormon" question, before the appearance of this letter. The paper even refused to publish conference notices, or notices of any meetings, either as "ads" or reading matter, while it gave space freely to anything from the opposite side. The appearance of this letter in The Telegram is therefore all the more gratifying to the Saints and Elders in Belfast, and it has done a vast amount of good. Mr. Jones is known to be a man of intelligence and whose judgment and truthfulness absolute reliance can be placed. He writes:

"Twelve months spent travelling through the State of Utah, the land of 'Mormonism,' has taught me many things of a strange civilization. To me Mormonism formerly spelled polygamy, and to be a 'Mormon' I believed one necessarily had a harem of many wives and numerous lady friends. I find, however, that such is not the case. The 'Mormon' people are a progressive and intelligent people and altogether minus fanatical ideas about religion. The Book of Mormon and its doctrines are identical with those of the New Testament, and teach salvation through Christ. Some time prior to my present visit to Utah I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Susa Young Gates, one of Brigham Young's daughters, at the Suffrage Convention in Washington. In personal appearance and intelligence that delegation of a dozen women who accompanied her from Utah stood in the front rank. They seemed to have an added dignity from the consciousness that they represented a State whose men were so liberal and so progressive as to grant to womanhood the right of complete suffrage. The interest aroused by meeting these types of 'Mormon' women led me to further investigate their home environment in the intermountain State. I was fortunate enough to get a letter of introduction to the present head of the Mormon Church, Joseph F. Smith, nephew to Joseph Smith, the prophet and founder of Mormonism. My greatest lack of real knowledge I found to be in regard to polygamy. I shared the common belief that every Mormon man who chose to do so might marry more than one wife. Senator Smoot, one of the apostles, removed this misconception at once by informing me that those who wished an extra handmaiden had to secure permission and enter a special Church order, and permission was granted only to those who had the highest standing morally, intellectually, and physically. They also had to prove their financial ability to justify the assumption of the increased responsibilities of polygamy. Brigham Young when refusing applications for the polygamous order would say 'No' kindly, but firmly. 'I am sorry you are allowed to have one wife,' when the enamored one was a man he regarded as unsuitable. The manifesto issued in 1890, and adopted by the Church, forbade any marriage which violated the law of the land. This declaration has been adhered to except in a few isolated cases.

"It may be interesting to note that

THE BOOK OF MORMON

explicitly condemns polygamy. The practice was instituted through a special revelation to Joseph Smith, the prophet. Polygamy may have been desirable, perhaps necessary, under the early pioneer conditions as in the days of Abraham, and no doubt there were many unfeeling and unholy incidents in the disposal and distribution of female immigrants from Europe, recruited by the Mormon missionaries there, under promise of 'Canaan.' But that has all passed away like the old regime of the orthodox religions. Many of the Mormon women whom I met believe polygamy to be right quite as firmly as the men.

"I am not drawing conclusions from the statements of a few prominent Mormons wishing to defend the former practices of their people, but rather I wish to give my observations from a year's sojourn in different parts of the State. I do not wish to be understood as advocating polygamy, but it is a fact that leaders, like the Governor, Senator Smoot, the State Superintendent of Education, the President of the Normal School, and most of the leading men of Utah, are children of polygamous families. Those with whom I have conversed on the subject spoke kindly of their fathers' wives, rather than their own mothers. This I could not understand. When one travels through

of eternal progress was taught by Joseph Smith: 'It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance. A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge. The glory of God is intelligence.' These were aphorisms with the Prophet Joseph Smith. I believe Mormonism is in the world for the world's good, just as much as any other branch or side issue of the great Christian religion.

"Perhaps the greatest treat in store for the tourist in Utah is a visit to the Great Salt Lake, the Dead Sea of America. The lake contains one-fifth of the entire ingredients in salt. The lake is about twenty miles from the city. A railway owned by the Mormon Church runs to it during the season. Last spring when I was there the season was not quite open, but the President, Joseph F. Smith, kindly provided a special train, so that I might enjoy the beautiful pavilion which is built out on the lake, and have a swim in the buoyant water—at least I expected to swim, but was surprised to find that I could not sink low enough in the water to be able to swim properly. Lying on my back, I tried in vain to get my feet in the water. One of the most amusing sights to be seen anywhere in the world is a common experience on the Great Salt Lake. A man who wishes to enjoy himself perfectly lights a cigar, sits down on the water, and takes a walk to his feet. Holding the rope in his hand, and resting in an easy position on the cushioned bosom of the lake, he sails where he chooses. Time never passed more pleasantly for me than when I sat in an easy position and smoked, with my body nearly half out of the water. Taken as a whole, Utah has many attractions for the tourist and investor. Salt Lake City affords an unprejudiced man abundant opportunities for studying economic, social, and educational questions. It was a surprise to me. Its broad streets, its fine business houses, its splendid homes, and its crystal streams, running on both sides of the streets, are distinctive features of this unique and beautiful city.

H. CHERRY JONES.

Jones Bros. & Daly, Ltd., Ormeau avenue, Belfast.

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their country, and sees the garden spot reclaimed from land adjacent to the great American desert, in justice he must give credit to a people who have erected a civilization second to none out of an arid and mountainous wilderness. Many of us are content to judge the Latter-day Saints as they are today, or on their pioneer achievements, rather than on their past or present beliefs. This is, perhaps, too liberal a view for the average orthodox minister found in Salt Lake City. One patriarchal old gentleman, who accompanied me on several prospecting trips through southern Utah, often spoke with much feeling on this subject, and lamented the fact that some men could not be true to only one woman, whereas he had been true to three women all his life—his three wives. The Mormon Church takes up no collections, receives no donations. Strangers are always welcome in their tabernacles.

"Mormonism has its commercial or material side, a subject affording its enemies much ground for unfavorable criticism. The Church controls the great sugar beet trusts of Idaho and Utah, capitalized at many million dollars; woolen mills, cotton mills, and Saltair Pavilion—Utah's great bathing resort, the Deseret telegraph—in advent of the railroad; Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution, another million dollar concern; and the Salt Lake Theater. The Church also operates banks, insurance companies, and many other commercial undertakings.

UTAH HAS NO PAUPERS,

no beggars, few tramps. The indigent aged or other unfortunates are well cared for by the Church. It has always been a cardinal teaching with the L. D. S. that a religion which has not the power to save people temporally, and make them prosperous and happy here, cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually or exalt them in the life to come. The ancient Jewish tithing system is in vogue, and adds to the Church coffers an annual sum of over two million dollars. Every Mormon is under moral obligation to give one-tenth of his income to the Church. The priesthood receives nothing, or very little, in the way of remuneration for its services, and the missionaries pay all their own expenses. Each mission lasts from two to three years. I met one of their young men in Alaska some time ago, I afterwards called with his family, residing in Lower Utah, and received a royal Irish welcome from his people. Two of his sisters had just returned from studying music in Europe. These girls were a peculiar contrast to the lonely country in which they lived. They were polished and suave of manner, graceful, and fit to take their places in any drawing-room.

"Mormons are friends and promoters of education. To the Latter-day Saints, salvation itself, under the atonement of Christ, is a process of education. That knowledge is a means of eternal progress was taught by Joseph Smith: 'It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance. A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge. The glory of God is intelligence.' These were aphorisms with the Prophet Joseph Smith. I believe Mormonism is in the world for the world's good, just as much as any other branch or side issue of the great Christian religion.

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